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## The social psychology of citizenship, participation and social exclusion

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## Special Thematic Section on "The Social Psychology of Citizenship, Participation and Social Exclusion"

### The Social Psychology of Citizenship, Participation and Social Exclusion: Introduction to the Special Thematic Section

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#### Abstract

The aim of this special thematic section is to bring together recent social psychological research on the topic of citizenship with a view to discerning the emerging trends within the field and its potential contributions to the broader interdisciplinary area of citizenship studies. Eight papers spanning diverse theoretical traditions (including social identity, social representations and discursive approaches) apply an array of methods to consider different aspects of citizenship across a variety of cultural and national contexts. Some focus on individuals' perceptions and discussions of citizenship, others examine the group dynamics which flow from these understandings, and the rest examine the potential for citizenship to exclude as well as include marginalised communities. While diverse, the contributions share some core commonalities: all share a concern in trying to understand citizenship from the perspective of the citizen; all conceptualise citizenship as an active and reflective process occurring between members of a community; and all highlight the irreducibly social and collective nature of the experience and practice of citizenship in everyday life. We propose that these elements of convergence have the potential to give the social psychology of citizenship a solid basis and recognisable profile in order to contribute to the broader arena of citizenship studies.

**Keywords:** social psychology, citizenship, social identity, social representations, discursive psychology, citizenship studies

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In the decades after Kymlicka and Norman (1994) announced an explosion of research on the topic of citizenship across the social sciences, a ripple appears to have passed through the discipline of social psychology. Two special issues (Condor, 2011; Sanchez-Mazas & Klein, 2003), an edited volume (Borgida, Federico, & Sullivan, 2009) and a variety of individual contributions (e.g., Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Barnes, Auburn, & Lea, 2004; Condor & Gibson, 2007; Haste, 2004) have reflected upon the social psychology of citizenship and appear to provide sufficient empirical work to provide critical mass to the area. The present collection of papers aims to in-

crease this momentum by bringing together more recent advances across the social psychology of citizenship with a view to consolidating and focusing research in this area as well as identifying future avenues of research.

In addition, we chose to focus the special section on the aspects of citizenship pertaining to participation and exclusion as we felt that these areas in particular capture the uniqueness of the social psychological literature on this topic. In doing so we hope to begin the process of outlining how our discipline can contribute toward cross-disciplinary understanding of citizenship within the social sciences. The following papers provide a good starting point for this as, in line with previous special issues, they span the theoretical approaches, epistemologies and methods of our discipline. They illustrate the range of topics and issues to which social psychology can usefully contribute, and they identify some points of convergence with other disciplines.

Yet, it becomes readily apparent that each paper included within this thematic section starts afresh in outlining the conceptual basis upon which it is based. Several hark back to the definitive work of T. H. [Marshall \(1950\)](#) on the civil, political and social rights underpinning citizenship, or classic theories of republicanism and liberalism. Others borrow from more recent cross-disciplinary movements such as discursive and ecological approaches to highlight the limitations of extant social psychological paradigms. A few reference the small fragmented body of previous work within social psychology to date. In effect, social psychology has had no recognisable tradition on which to build our work.

In part this is due to the diversity of methods and epistemologies within social psychology that makes the articulation of a single position difficult, if not impossible. Indeed one response has been to make a virtue of this diversity and present it as resonating with the increasing array of poststructuralist and postmodern approaches in sociology and political theory ([Condor, 2011](#)). Another has been to promote a single theoretical paradigm as the basis for the social psychology of citizenship ([Sanchez-Mazas & Klein, 2003](#)). A further, more recent, attempt has been to draw from eclectic sources across political, developmental, community and social psychology to produce a single integrated model of citizenship and civic engagement ([Pancer, 2014](#)).

The present special thematic section presents an alternative approach which neither reduces the contribution of social psychology to a single model nor leaves the disparate strands isolated and separate. We suggest that the papers here, while diverse in nature, share a common set of values, concerns and interests that derive from a shared history. Together they arguably form the basis of a coherent and recognisable social psychology of citizenship, making a substantive and distinct contribution toward broader citizenship studies. This distinctiveness can be enhanced by reflecting upon the historical genesis of the concept of citizenship within our discipline and how this has been informed by its various traditions. We attempt to do so below. We then, through considering the papers included in this thematic section, attempt to discern common aims and values across the current social psychology of citizenship. We conclude with some reflections on how, as academic citizens, social psychologists can participate in the community of citizenship studies scholars.

## Previous Approaches to Citizenship in Social Psychology: Positivism, Activism, Constructionism

### Early Roots: The Participating Citizen

As [Loredo-Narciandi and Castro-Tejerina \(2013\)](#) point out, while many scholars lament the relative absence of the study of citizenship in earlier epochs of social psychology, it is surprising to see early 20<sup>th</sup> century texts dedicated to the topic. It seems that the study of citizenship within psychology was part of a broader agenda of progressive social reforms to which the discipline contributed (in this they include the work of [Crane, 1928](#); [Garnett, 1921](#); [Johnston, 1927](#); [Weeks, 1917](#)). While the approaches to citizenship advocated by these early 20<sup>th</sup> century authors reflect the emphasis on drives, habits and mental capacities current at that time in psychology, their foci of inquiry remain remarkably relevant: for example, [Weeks \(1917\)](#) considered citizenship education, participation at work, voting behaviour as well as engagement with the legal system and property ownership among his topics. In effect, Weeks' model of the citizen (though limited by the theoretical and methodological constraints of the time) is a rich and detailed one with direct parallels and links to contemporary sociological understandings of the citizen. It is pertinent to note that these topics are classically 'liberal' in nature ([Schuck, 2002](#)). The focus lies primarily on individual economic, social and political engagement as sources of personal as well as societal improvement. Yet, a 'communitarian' focus is also somewhat evident, in that participation as part of a broader collective was seen as a key ingredient of citizenship behaviour.

In the post-war era, the issue of citizens' participation as the basis for democratic society remained a salient issue within social psychology. For example, Gordon Allport used his 1944 presidential address to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues to outline an agenda for the study and promotion of citizen participation ([G. Allport, 1945](#)). He argued in favour of psychology addressing challenges faced by the populations of increasingly bureaucratised, industrialised and secularised modern societies so as to prevent political and social disengagement among them. He contrasted two broad conceptualisations of citizenship within the discipline as a means to achieve this. The first, attributed to John [Dewey \(1927\)](#), was concerned with engaging citizens in meaningful participation in the local practices and decisions that shaped their lives. From this perspective, citizenship was aligned with participation at a community level in order to protect and advance citizens' interests within broader society. The second, from the work of Floyd [Allport \(1933\)](#), was concerned with active citizenship as a reflective, critical process that draws on individual agency within the broader social system. Citizens' interests were to be furthered through the development of critical faculties whereby each citizen could interrogate and challenge the received wisdom of society. Reflecting social concerns in U.S. society at the time, both approaches foregrounded the role of the individual in shaping their own place within society and resisting the excesses of authority. Also, notably each emphasised participation at the expense of citizenship status or social rights.

From these perspectives of the 'engaged' and 'reflective' citizen, Gordon Allport set out a programme of research and practice for psychologists to better facilitate citizens' participation within their societies. Its goals included: the design of public service delivery to better engage the citizenry; the development and refinement of different understandings of citizen participation and engagement to better harness the various abilities of individual citizens; the improvement of participation in the workplace through better organisational design; the enhancement of participation in community and neighbourhood fora; and the engagement of the public in scientific activity (including in psychological research). Furthermore, this programme of research outlined a role for social psychologists in en-

gaging with policy-makers and users of research through what would, in today's parlance, be termed 'an impact agenda'. In other words, he argued that social psychology needed to reflexively apply a model of active citizen engagement to its own activities in order for it to have a positive effect upon society.

This early flourishing of ideas reflected the post-war concern with enhancing and preserving the variant of liberal, democratic values current within the United States. It posited a universalistic model of individual citizenship which largely ignored the uneven distribution of rights on the basis of race and gender and neglected issues of social or welfare rights. However, it did not, in the end, result in a continuous programme of citizenship studies within 20<sup>th</sup> century social psychology. Later core texts in social psychology do mention issues of socialisation, social structure and collective action (e.g. [Brown, 1965](#)), but the topic of citizenship itself slides from view. This reflects the move in social psychology away from sociology towards a more universalistic, reductionist, cognitive model of the individual and a corresponding increase in the emphasis on the exclusive use of the laboratory experiment. Consequently, an understanding of 'society' became increasingly absent from social psychological accounts.

However, the legacy of these early concerns with the participatory nature of citizenship, its community focus and its engaged and critical dimensions can be traced through three traditions in which the concept of citizenship later flourished: organisational psychology, community psychology and discursive psychology. This selection is not intended to exhaust all areas of psychology cognate to the study of citizenship (after all, most areas of political psychology and many applied areas of social psychology could be considered as such) but to identify the traditions in which citizenship has been studied explicitly as a topic in its own right. Below we outline each in turn and trace their impact upon contemporary social psychological approaches to the themes of citizenship, participation and exclusion.

## The Psychology of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Positive Citizenship

The most voluminous psychological literature on citizenship and participation has been in organisational and industrial psychology, where researchers addressed individual worker behaviour and specifically that form of voluntary, extra-role behaviour that can be considered to be 'good citizenship' within an organisation. In some respects this usage removes the concept of citizenship from its societal origins and strips it of its political philosophy roots, such that it is perhaps better understood as a metaphor ([Smith, 2002](#)) rather than the conventional study of citizenship as a social science topic. However, this would be to ignore the earlier emphases on the central role of employment in citizenship within psychology (see above) and in sociology, where the concept of the 'worker-citizen' is central to classical models of citizenship ([Turner, 2001](#)). It would also ignore the impact of organisational psychology on later understandings of citizenship elsewhere in the discipline. Finally, it would neglect the significance of the continuance of a collective, 'communitarian' understanding of citizenship ([Delanty, 2002](#)) – one based on ties to a sub-societal collective unit (albeit one shaped by primarily economic interests within an institutional setting).

The origins of the concept of citizenship behaviour in organisational psychology are often attributed to the work of Daniel [Katz \(1964\)](#). Katz had identified that the success of any organisation depended upon innovative and spontaneous behaviours from its employees that go beyond formal role prescriptions. While such behaviours may be ill-defined and remain unrewarded within the formal structures of organisations, they facilitate the smooth functioning of the workplace while providing the flexibility among its members to deal with unexpected threats and challenges. This concept of 'good citizen behaviours' in the workplace gained popularity in the 1980s as organisational structures moved away from rigid individualised job roles towards team-working and more fluid forms of collective endeavour. Such practices increased the necessity and impact of voluntary communication and cooper-

ation between workers. Within organizational psychology these developments gave rise to the concept of 'Organizational Citizenship Behaviour' (OCB) defined by [Organ \(1988\)](#) as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" ([Organ, 1988](#), p. 4).

Originally OCB had two dimensions: 'altruism' (or helping behaviour) and 'compliance' (or adherence to institutional norms and values). These were later refined into several sub-dimensions that were thought to operate at both individual and organisational levels: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy and sportsmanship. These reflected the character of the good 'worker-citizen' and were shown to be influenced by various elements of the workplace environment, in particular leadership, institutional fairness and the clarity of role descriptions. In turn, OCB was found to contribute to overall organisational performance through impacting upon the attainment of individual and organisational goals. Indeed, it has been estimated that up to 25% of the variance in organisations' financial indicators are predicted by OCB alone ([Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000](#)). Also, although OCB by definition involves additional exertion, it was (perhaps counter-intuitively) associated with increased job satisfaction and lower levels of stress and burnout at the level of the individual and improved aggregate wellbeing at the level of the organisation.

Of course this understanding of 'citizenship' bears only a superficial resemblance to that of earlier psychological analyses of citizenship. While it contains some of the emphases on active participation and pro-sociality inherent in Dewey's and Floyd Allport's ideas, 'citizenship' has been removed from its broader social and cultural context and lacks any of the critical or political force of these earlier conceptualisations. Even within the confines of organisational psychology, the concept is complicated by lack of conceptual clarity and an overlap with competing concepts (e.g., 'extra-role behaviour', 'contextual performance' and 'prosocial organisational behaviours': [Organ, 1997](#)). Moreover, it is recognisably a concept designed and measured from a management perspective and, as a consequence, struggles to deal with behaviours that could be described as both prosocial and extra-role but which are critical of and challenge the organisation (e.g., 'whistle-blowing' and 'principled organisational dissent'; [Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995](#)). As such, the concept of OCB arguably serves to illustrate the relative poverty of reductionist psychological approaches to the study of citizenship which neglect asymmetries of power, intergroup struggle and contestation.

Despite this, this tradition's study of OCB has, in fact, proven seminal across the wider discipline. As outlined below, the finding that the additional effort required by citizenship behaviours is associated with more satisfaction, less stress and better collective health has become a core tenet of the community psychology approach to citizenship participation. Moreover, the social identity approach has used the study of employees' OCB as key evidence for the pivotal relationship between organisational identification and group-level behaviour ([Ashforth & Mael, 1989](#); [Haslam, 2004, 2014](#)). From this perspective, OCB is not reducible to individual altruism or to a personal reaction to positive workplace structure, but is behaviour that only makes sense in terms of the shared interests and goals of the group itself. Insofar as the employee has internalised the broader organisation's identity, OCB is effectively an enactment of that identity.

The implications of this for group-based approaches to organisational citizenship behaviour are manifold ([Blader & Tyler, 2009](#); [Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004](#); [Haslam, 2004, 2014](#); [Van Knippenberg, 2000](#)). Firstly, if OCB is understood to be an enactment of the relevant organisational identity, it will be experienced as intrinsically rewarding as the individual is enacting an aspect of their own self-concept. Second, in line with a broader under-



standing of intragroup processes, OCB reflects increased trust, reciprocity and influence among members who share a common identity, and hence should have a positive impact on individual wellbeing. Thirdly, shared social identity forms the basis of cooperation, coordination and collective action, whereby the group can improve its position relative to others. Where this shared identity is extended to the organisation as a whole, this should be reflected in greater organisational productivity and success; where the relevant identity reflects a subgroup within the organisation, this should be reflected in the pursuit of fair and equal treatment within the organisational structure, or action to challenge and change the structure.

From this perspective then, a fuller understanding of the identity dynamics underpinning 'organisational citizenship behaviour' within the sphere of industrial relations regains some of the concept's previous political and critical dimensions. In addition, it locates these properties at the level of the collective and highlights the intrinsically rewarding nature of behaviour undertaken at the level of the group for both group and individuals. As part of a broader application of self-categorisation theory principles of organisational psychology (Haslam, 2014), OCB thus provided an exemplary case study of the relationship between individual and collective interest and action for social psychology more generally.

## The Community Psychology of Citizen Participation: Active Citizenship

A rather different conceptualisation of the social nature of citizenship was simultaneously present within community psychology. Emerging in the United States in the 1960s from the field of clinical psychology and community mental health (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), community psychologists studied the role of 'citizen participation' in developing and empowering local communities, especially those that are marginalised and disadvantaged (Florin & Wandersman, 1990). Community psychologists typically use the term 'citizenship' to denote the formal and informal rights, entitlements and obligations held by all community members while 'citizenship participation' can be formally defined as "a process in which individuals take part in the institutions, programs and environments which affect them" (Heller, Price, Reinhartz, & Wandersman, 1984, p. 339). In practice, this has been taken to include grassroots involvement in local community organisations and social issue-focused groups and, according to its advocates, its benefits are demonstrable at the individual, organisational, community and national level. Accordingly, this approach shares with OCB a form of citizenship recognisable in classic theories as 'civic communalism' (i.e., it emphasises the obligation of members to participate in community life for the betterment of the group), though some forms of community psychology additionally emphasise the critical and transformative nature of citizen participation and collective community action (e.g., Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

The research in this area has typically aimed to understand which citizens participate as well as the factors facilitating or impeding participation and the effects of participation upon the individuals and communities involved (Orford, 2008; Pancer, 2014). A range of demographic factors and individual characteristics such as age, ethnic group and self-reported level of civic responsibility all predict participation, though these factors vary systematically according to the specifics of the local area, voluntary organisation and social issue. These factors also predict level of participation (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Kagan, Castile, & Stewart, 2005) from non-participation and disengagement to active engagement and 'citizen control' of local decision-making.

In addition, across most studies, the degree of investment in the community, strength of sense of community or 'community identity' has been consistently found to predict citizens' participation (Wandersman & Florin, 2000). A sense of community has been found to shape the perception of the environment, affect relationships with others and lead to a stronger sense of the capacity of the community to achieve its goals, all of which lead to increased

participation. Participation leads to an increased sense of personal efficacy, personal and organisational empowerment as well as an enhanced critical understanding of the local socio-political environment (Kieffer, 1984). In other words, citizen participation and community empowerment have been found to be mutually reinforcing (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 1990). Conversely though, negative or stigmatised identities have been found to constitute a significant barrier to community participation (e.g., McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013). As a consequence, the role of community activists is often a dual one: to challenge stereotypes and engage local community members.

Notably, as with organisational citizenship behaviour above, the study of citizenship participation has also focused on the organisational factors underpinning the sustainability of community action. Most voluntary organisations last less than one year, regardless of the persistence of the social need they address (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Orford, 2008; Wandersman & Florin, 2000). Specifically, citizens' participation and consensus-building has been identified as crucial at the stages of initial mobilisation of community members, but also at the stage of role differentiation and leadership determination. The perseverance of participation is related to the level and seniority of the individual's involvement as well as the success of the organisation. In other words, citizens' continued participation is inextricable from the structural and psychological dimensions of the collective grassroots movement.

Furthermore, citizen participation is demonstrably contingent upon the community or voluntary organisations' interactions with the authorities. Participation will be inhibited by perceptions of tokenism or perceived discrimination by government organisations. As Tyler, Rasinski, and Griffin (1986) point out, citizens' decisions as to whether to engage with authorities and participate in decision-making processes are based on perceptions of how the government views them and whether they can expect to be treated fairly in relation to other groups. Groups which feel respected and which have faith in the procedural fairness of the government processes will be more willing to cooperate with authorities and participate in decision making than groups who do not. Again, the role of negative identities among marginalised and excluded communities is key, with the negative perceptions of authorities and service providers acting to deter community engagement and suppress participation (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Renedo & Marston, 2011; Stevenson, McNamara, & Muldoon, 2014).

Again we can note several elements of the concept of citizenship which, though somewhat different from OCB, are worth considering as characteristic of psychological understandings of this topic. Firstly, the concept of citizenship here is inextricable from participation. Citizens gain their identity and rights from their community membership and the meaning of their actions is derived from their alignment with community goals. Participation is found to be intrinsically rewarding and is demonstrably linked to health and wellbeing (at the individual as well as the collective level). In other words, despite the demands of participation, the rewards experienced by the individual are considerable and measurable. Moreover, this research conceptualises citizenship participation as an inherently inclusive concept that emphasises the opportunity and obligation of all community members to take part. It also highlights the consequences of social and psychological barriers in preventing participation and the consequences of social exclusion within marginalised communities.

Citizen participation is also conceptualised as inherently collective and (as with collective approaches to the study of OCB) this again highlights the pivotal role of identity processes in this form of collective action (as well as in its suppression and deterrent). Indeed, this aspect of citizenship participation has informed later developments in the psychology of collective action that have incorporated the understanding of participation as intrinsically rewarding



and shown the close relationship between participation, empowerment and perseverance in collective action over time (e.g., [Drury & Reicher, 2005](#); [Stürmer & Kampmeier, 2003](#); [van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012](#)).

Finally, community psychology (as with organisational psychology) locates the practices and consequences of citizenship within the context of everyday life. On the one hand, this displays a lack of engagement with questions concerning the definition and enforcement of legal and political understandings of citizenship or with the rights and entitlements that citizenship status can confer. On the other, it provides a distinctly psychological focus on the understanding and action of the citizen within the lived reality of their social and physical contexts. This, in turn, forms the basis for more recent developments in conceptualising citizenship in relation to its spatial and residential settings (e.g., [Di Masso, 2015](#), this section; [McNamara, Muldoon, Stevenson, & Slattery, 2011](#)).

As with OCB research, the limitations to this conceptualisation of citizenship are also illuminating. Aside from a lack of integration with broader social science understandings of citizenship, the lack of reflection on the definition of citizenship status within communities means that this strand of community psychology has often ignored the essentially contested nature of the concepts of citizen and community. As [Pancer \(2014\)](#) admits, the general focus on inclusivity and democratic values in this tradition has sometimes been at the expense of the consideration of the very different experiences of individuals and groups of citizens within the social structure. However, more radical approaches have examined the perceptions and experiences of citizenship participation from the perspectives of different disadvantaged communities. This more differentiated approach has considered the specific challenges faced by groups on the basis of their economic and ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexuality, disability and age as well as relationship with their environment ([Kagan & Burton, 2000](#)). Accordingly, community psychology has begun to address the differentiated experiences, values and practices of citizenship in contemporary societies.

### **The Micro-Politics of Everyday Interaction: Constructionist Citizenship**

A third approach within social psychology takes this issue of the definition and negotiation of citizenship status in everyday life as its primary focus. This more recent approach emerged from the social constructionist, discursive and dialogical movements within psychology in the late 1980s ([Billig, 1987](#); [Billig et al., 1988](#); [Potter & Wetherell, 1987](#)) and is most clearly expressed by John [Shotter \(1993\)](#). Taking as a starting point the essentially contested nature of citizenship, Shotter argues for an examination of how rights and entitlements associated with personhood are manifest and negotiated in interpersonal interaction. From this perspective, citizenship is inextricably linked to lay understandings of what it is to be a person, as well as the rights understood to be attached to this ontological position within the social world. Accordingly, the micro-politics of social interaction – who gets to say what, when and who will be listened to – will reflect and manifest these rights.

The upshot of this focus on the micro-level detail of interaction is that citizenship, rather than being simply a matter of legal definition, organisational structure, community movement or individual personality, is understood to be a matter of dialogical engagement between interlocutors, through which the meaning of what it is to have rights emerges. While this is fluid and indeterminate, it does not occur afresh in each interaction but rather exists within broader ‘discourses’ or patterns of ideas on citizenship which constrain as well as empower us to create and contest our social reality. This engagement also occurs within a culturally-shared tacit understanding or ‘feeling’ for the norms governing such encounters and their outcomes. Within this space, people manage their identities as moral agents, positioning themselves within discourses, accounting for their actions, maintaining their rights to speak as competent social actors and performing their interactive business on the basis of holding these rights ([Harré, 1983](#); [Potter & Wetherell, 1987](#)).

This approach provides a radical departure from previous understandings of citizenship. In contrast with work conducted in the OCB tradition, it offers a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the critical and creative potential of citizenship. It also departs from the more macro-level analysis of community and organisational aspects of citizen participation in favour of a micro-interpersonal focus. Yet, still it shares some of the characteristics of these previous formulations. Primarily, it is a relational rather than an individualistic perspective in that it is concerned with the interactions between individuals. Second, it requires an element of shared understanding, as participants need to share the broad rules governing interaction in order to have successful engagement (even if this engagement is contestation and debate). [Shotter \(1993\)](#) characterises this as an 'imagined community', in which the entitlement to speak and be heard depends on the acceptance of others as 'one of us'. Whereas some will automatically be accepted as insiders and have the right to speak, others will need to assert and prove their membership. While of course there are competing understandings and perspectives within any such community, the boundaries are drawn at the point at which someone is marginalised or silenced by virtue of being an outsider. Third, it locates the study of citizenship in the everyday lives and experiences of individuals (albeit in a more profound way than the previous approaches).

[Haste \(2004\)](#) explicitly draws upon these divergent elements to make a case for a thoroughgoing constructionist approach to the social psychology of citizenship which incorporates active participation and collective action as well as a consideration of the negotiation of citizenship status in interaction. Adopting [Shotter's \(1993\)](#) model, she argues that the study of citizenship should include the analysis of identity dynamics (within talk but also collectively within groups), the negotiation of position-taking (in micro-interaction, but also in relation to shared representations of groups), the construction of narrative accounts of citizenship (at the level of the individual but also the broader cultural discourse), and the development of personal and collective efficacy through active participation. This synthetic approach is used to identify the variety of different understandings of citizenship and modes of participation that are available to people: From the participants' perspective, civic engagement is perceived very differently from political action; public participation is experienced differently to private interactions, and the meaning of each will be shaped and informed by the cultural and social specificities of the groups and citizenship issues involved. Later work by [Gray and Griffin \(2014\)](#) and [Condor and Gibson \(2007\)](#) has highlighted the value of studying official and lay understandings of citizenship in different cultural contexts in explaining the relationship between citizenship and national identity as well as the role of different formulations of citizenship in facilitating or inhibiting active participation.

A further dimension of citizenship foregrounded by the constructionist approach is the exclusive nature of citizenship. While organisational and community psychology approaches deal indirectly with the potentially exclusive effects of the absence of participation or barriers to engagement, they do not reflect on how the definition of citizenship serves to exclude individuals and groups from participation. In contrast, the constructionist approach (though focusing on the consequences of informal, everyday definitions of citizenship) allows for a direct investigation of the various ways in which citizenship can be used to deny rights and entitlements to others. In [Shotter's \(1993\)](#) initial description, this was a tacit, subtle process of telling insider from outsider and affording rights to speak accordingly. Other work in this domain has been more explicit: [Barnes et al. \(2004\)](#) demonstrate how constructions of citizenship are tied to locality and belonging and are systematically used by local residents to rhetorically deny social and economic rights to travellers' groups; [Gibson and Hamilton \(2011\)](#) illustrate how constructions of citizenship based on effort and participation are used to rhetorically exclude the unemployed; and [Stevenson et al. \(2014\)](#) illustrate how understandings of residents as 'bad citizens' undermine successful service-use interactions in disadvantaged communities. In other words, while research on citizenship within psychology has largely ignored

issues of the denial of citizenship status, constructionist approaches provide a critical exploration of how understandings of citizenship can be used to exclude individuals and groups and to deny them rights on this basis.

## **Some Commonalities Across the Social Psychology of Citizenship: Citizenship as Understanding, Participating, Excluding**

As noted already, this overview of three traditions of research on citizenship within social, organisational and community psychology is not intended to be an exhaustive coverage of work within the discipline relating to citizenship. For example, most areas of political psychology deal in one way or another with the application of psychological concepts and methods to the study of issues of citizenship, participation and exclusion. Also, many other areas of social psychology deal with topics cognate to the study of citizenship, especially those that examine pro-social behaviour, intergroup relations and collective action. However, the purpose of the present review is to outline past understandings of citizenship within psychology that have explicitly or implicitly influenced the contemporary social psychology of citizenship.

Considering the papers included in this special thematic section, we are able to discern common aims and values across contemporary social psychological approaches to studying citizenship. These, we argue, are recognisably derived from their collective heritage within organisational, community and social constructionist forms of psychology. In recognising these continuities and commonalities, we can begin to solidify the identity of the area.

### **Understanding Citizenship: Constructing, Practicing and Contesting Citizenship in Everyday Life**

Firstly, all contributions to the thematic section evidently inherit a core concern to understand citizenship subjectively, from the perspective of the citizen (or non-citizen). As we have seen above, OCB is rooted in the understanding of the motivations and perception of the individual within the collective, while citizenship participation in community psychology concerns both the perceptions of citizens and the recursive effects of participation upon their identities. Privileging the perspectives of the citizens over those of theorists or the state is, arguably, the most obvious contribution of social psychology, and has been a longstanding concern within community psychology and discursive psychology. Insofar as citizenship is a property of the citizenry and citizenship is ingrained in everyday life, social psychology is particularly well placed to explore the perceptions and meanings that inform the lived experience of citizenship.

Three papers in the present thematic section focus in particular on how definitions and dimensions of citizenship can be understood to embody and enact different concerns and interests within the polity. While decades of social theory have delineated the classic theories of republican, liberal and communitarian citizenship (see, e.g., [Delanty, 2002](#); [Smith, 2002](#)), these papers focus on how popular views diverge from these ideal types and on citizenship as experienced and constructed from the bottom-up.

In the first paper, 'Schooling, Citizen-Making, and Anti-Immigrant Prejudice in France', [Roebroeck and Guimond \(2015, this section\)](#) examine the roles of schools in France as a central site in the transmission of official understandings of republican citizenship. They consider both the type of school and length of time in school, finding

that older pupils of mainstream (rather than vocational) schools adhere more closely to French republican principles. In addition, they demonstrate the conceptual difference between understandings of 'colour blind' republican values and the newly emerging secular values of religious suppression (new *laïcité*). While within the French context, colour blind egalitarianism is associated with decreased prejudice, the values of new *laïcité* are associated with increased prejudice. In other words, while schools may constitute a key location for the transmission of the officially sanctioned policies of egalitarianism, they may also serve as a site for popular philosophies of exclusion.

In the second paper, 'Constructions of 'the Polish' in Northern England: Findings From a Qualitative Interview Study', Gibson (2015, this section) also examines lay understandings of citizenship among school-aged children in a similar educational setting in northern England. Building upon previous investigations of popular understandings of citizenship in this context, he adopts a critical approach to further explore the relationship between citizenship and social exclusion, in this case the exclusion of recent Polish immigrants. His results chime with those of Roebroek and Guimond in identifying the interplay between different citizenship-related values and forms of prejudice. His qualitative methods facilitate an insight into the complexity and diversity of these associations, with Polish migrants disparaged on the basis of their perceived economic over-activity and underactivity, their lack of acculturation and their sense of overentitlement, their physical appearances and threat. While elsewhere theorists have investigated the emancipatory potential of extending the concept of citizenship from formal political and legal arenas to the micro-politics of mundane, everyday life (Isin, 2008; Isin & Nielsen, 2008; Lewis, 2004; Lister, 2003), it would appear that these arenas also provide rich resources for the systematic rejection and exclusion of outsiders.

Notably, Gibson's work also points to the needs to consider the relationship between understandings of citizenship and collectivities other than the nation. While contributors in the present special section and elsewhere in social psychology have previously argued for the centrality of the nation to conceptualisations of citizenship, Gibson points to the ways in which local community and territory can be mobilised to claim and assert rights as well as to deny these to others (see also Barnes et al., 2004). This spatial understanding of citizenship is developed more fully by Di Masso (2015, this section) in his consideration of the contestation of public space in Barcelona – 'Micro-politics of Public Space: On the Contested Limits of Citizenship as a Locational Practice'. Di Masso considers how the use of public space both reflects and enacts understandings of rights and entitlements and consequently how divergent understandings of space can lead to embodied enactment of political challenge through protest. Here the relationship between top-down official models of compliant citizenship and bottom-up constructions of the active engagement of local communities come into conflict. In effect, locality-based identity is mobilised to oppose and resist the erosion of rights of access and ownership of public space.

## Citizenship as Participation: Ingroup Dynamics and Collective Engagement

While the set of papers described above focus on the definition and contestation of citizenship, the next set examines the processes of participation that rest upon these understandings. As we have seen above, the concept of participation has been at the heart of understandings of citizenship within psychology from the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Participation has continued to feature prominently in organisational and community psychology approaches to this topic which, through their emphases on collective endeavour, have helped lay the path to more recent attempts to recover a group-level perspective in making sense of social participation and engagement. The papers in the present thematic section identify the particular role played by group processes in shaping how

individuals engage and participate in political activity and, in particular, how social influence, leadership and collective action impact upon the dynamics of citizenship-based perception and behaviour.

Hopkins, Reicher, and van Rijswijk's (2015, this section) paper 'Everyday Citizenship: Identity Claims and Their Reception' uses an analysis of group dynamics to problematize the assumption of 'horizontal' citizenship (identification with a community of equals) in Scottish society. The authors examine how the performance and enactment of citizenship does not occur in isolation but is accepted or rejected by others within the group according to common understandings of what it is to be a citizen. As in most countries, understandings of the rights and entitlements associated with citizenship in Scotland are assumed to be universally extended to all citizens, but in practice are infused with inequality. This is partly attributable to the alignment of citizenship with the national community, within which some groups are seen as more central than others. Depending upon a person's background, this may have consequences for their credibility as a citizen and their ability to influence other group members accordingly. Their findings, that membership claims on the basis of subjective identification alone were less likely to be accepted than those based on birth or ancestry, fit well with previous analyses of Scottishness (Kiely, Bechhofer, & McCrone, 2005; Kiely, Bechhofer, Stewart, & McCrone, 2001). However, the additional finding that the voices of these members were also less influential illustrates the consequences for such understandings of citizenship in marginalising 'less Scottish' actors within the polity.

In contrast, Botindari and Reicher (2015, this section) in their paper 'The Active Follower: What Young Voters Look for in Political Leaders and Parties' Examine the Vertical Dimension of Citizenship (Identification Within a Political Institution). They situate their work within broader tensions evident in theories of citizenship: between elements of authority and citizen autonomy; between public and private forms of citizenship; between passive and active forms of engagement. Applying the social identity approach to leadership to the study of voting behaviour, they set out to explore these tensions by capturing the reflections and deliberations of Italian first time voters. This novel approach provides an insight into the competing concerns and interests considered by these young citizens that goes far beyond the rational decision-making models of conventional political psychology. It thereby sheds light on the necessarily collective, dynamic, intragroup processes underpinning political representation and the need to consider the role of both followers and leaders as actively shaping the identity and collective future of the group.

The subsequent paper by Antonini, Hogg, Mannetti, Barbieri, and Wagoner (2015, this section), 'Motivating Citizens to Participate in Public Policymaking: Identification, Trust and Cost-Benefit Analyses', again considers the collective nature of citizens' participation in civic life. Once more examining the Italian context, but supplementing this with a parallel investigation in the United States, this cross-national investigation considers participation in public policymaking as a form of collective action. Drawing upon existing models of group behaviour, Antonini considers both the motivating factors of the extrinsic rewards of individual participation alongside the intrinsic rewards of adhering to and enacting one's collective norms and values. In addition, Antonini pinpoints trust in the government as a key element in predicting participation. Together, these elements successfully predict participation and illustrate the pivotal role played by identification with and trust in the broader societal structures that frame participation.

## Citizenship, Exclusion and Inclusion

At all levels, the negotiation of citizenship demonstrably has exclusive as well as inclusive consequences. Although extensively researched within mainstream social psychology (e.g., Abrams, Hogg, & Marques, 2004), the impact of social exclusion has been largely overlooked in conventional psychological approaches to citizenship within



organisational settings and indeed within many community settings. This is of course at odds with the historic struggles for civil, political and social rights across the globe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as the burgeoning literature on differentiated citizenship elsewhere in the social sciences that takes as its focus the uneven distributions of rights and exclusive nature of different definitions of citizenship. However, among more critical approaches within community psychology and within constructionist social psychology, the subtle and often invisible mechanisms through which citizenship is actively constructed and used to marginalise and exclude have come to the fore. As illustrated in the work of [Barnes et al. \(2004\)](#) and others, every rhetorical boundary drawn around the citizenry works to include some and exclude others.

The papers by [Blackwood, Hopkins, and Reicher \(2015, this section\)](#), ‘Flying While Muslim’: Citizenship and Misrecognition in the Airport’, as well as [Rodríguez López, Andreouli, and Howarth \(2015, this section\)](#), ‘From Ex-Combatants to Citizens: Connecting Everyday Citizenship and Social Reintegration in Colombia’, examine the complex interplay of identity processes at the boundaries of citizenship, where practices based on definitions of citizenship can create either solidarity or conflict. The paper by Blackwood, Hopkins and Reicher brings together several themes already explicated in the special thematic section: the intersection of citizenship and national identity, the role of public space in shaping the experience of citizenship and the acceptance or rejection of identity claims by other citizens. Their study of Scottish Muslims’ experiences of airport security highlights the challenges faced by ‘suspect’ minorities in asserting their rights and entitlements as citizens in public space. The consequences of anticipated (and experienced) scrutiny and suspicion include suppressing interactions, inhibiting behaviours and restricting the expression and enactment of civic rights and entitlements. In other words, the tactics intended to tackle radicalisation and extremism among this group may work to further marginalise and exclude group members within a public arena which, ironically, should be a site of identity expression, recognition and validation for these citizens.

In the final empirical paper, Rodríguez López, Andreouli, and Howarth consider the converse process, whereby group members who have been formerly excluded can become accepted back into society through citizenship. After violent conflict, the disarmament and reintegration process of military actors is often complicated by institutional as well as community barriers of stigmatisation and rejection. Rodríguez López and colleagues examine this process among ex-combatants in Colombia, explaining that the process of re-integration necessitates an active re-appropriation, reinterpretation and repositioning of identity in relation to broader society. In concrete terms, this necessitates state support and recognition for the process as well as an active engagement by ex-combatants in systematically redefining their relationship within the networks and institutions of their local community.

Across both these last papers, the intergroup dynamics of the enactment, recognition and acceptance of identity are illustrated as key elements of the social psychology of citizenship. Along with the papers in the previous section, this illustrates for us the irreducibly social and collective nature of citizenship and the need to further develop a social psychology of lived experience and practice of citizenship in everyday life. This, we believe, is perhaps a core defining element of the social psychology of citizenship and we explore this and the other emergent aspects of citizenship from this special thematic section in the concluding paper in this section ([Stevenson, Hopkins, Luyt, & Dixon, 2015, this section](#)).



## Conclusion: The Citizenship of Social Psychology

From the accumulated research on citizenship in social psychology outlined above, we know that articulating a voice within a broader community requires some form of ontological claim: a sense of who we are; our entitlement to speak; and why we should be heard. This is very much the case for the fledgling social psychology of citizenship attempting to make a contribution within the broader arena of citizenship studies. For this to occur we require a clearer sense of where we come from so as to craft a message that is coherent and recognisable without being reductive or misleading.

In this article we have attempted to undertake some of this work. We first provided some background to the current approaches to citizenship, participation and exclusion within social psychology by reviewing previous and current approaches to these topics. This is not intended as a comprehensive review but to give a stronger sense of some of the origins of the study of citizenship within the discipline and to provide some insight into how these have shaped the way we currently understand and study the concept. We acknowledge that this specific focus provides something of a 'chiaroscuro' – selectively illuminating some aspects of the psychology of citizenship while obscuring others – but we argue that this serves to identify specific conceptual antecedents which help make sense of the current diversity of approaches to citizenship within psychology.

Second, rather than valorising this diversity of current approaches or attempting to present a single or integrative theory, we have attempted to illustrate commonalities across a range of social psychological approaches that may be of use in defining this area. Broadly speaking, we view the study of the constructive, active and collective (but often exclusive) understandings of citizenship in people's everyday lives to characterise much social psychological work in this area. Of course there are many disparate methodological and epistemological approaches within this, but we believe that these can be used in concert to contribute to a fuller understanding of citizenship that is distinctively social psychological in nature.

In our final contribution to this thematic section ([Stevenson et al., 2015](#), this section), we develop these arguments further to suggest where and how this contribution could be made. We consider some potential points of insertion in the broader sphere of citizenship studies and outline some key lines of inquiry that have potential to substantially develop the social psychology of citizenship: the everyday politics of recognition; the lived experience of intergroup contact; the study of the contested nature of the city. These are rooted in the ongoing work of the authors as well as the other contributors to this volume and we believe these topics could make for a constructive engagement with our colleagues in citizenship studies. This of course is simply a conversational 'opener' to a dialogue in which we hope to fully and critically participate.

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